# Programme Committee

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<th>Hundred and Twenty-ninth Session</th>
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<td>9-13 November 2020</td>
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<td>Progress Report on the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and FAO’s work in food systems</td>
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Documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The document provides an update on the status of preparations towards the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, of FAO’s role in supporting the Summit, and of recent developments of relevance to FAO’s broader support to Members in the development of their food systems.
- The four formal elements of the governance structure developed to support the process towards the Summit are now fully active, with the Advisory Committee meeting quarterly and the Scientific Group and the UN Task Force meeting on a monthly basis.
- The four outcomes of the Summit have been defined and provide the basis for the implementation of the process towards the Summit and of the post-Summit activities.
- The Chairs, Vice-Chairs and UN Anchor Organizations have been appointed for each of the five Action Tracks. Their membership and identification of key deliverables is under preparation. Members were invited to express their interest in actively engaging in an Action Track.
- Food Systems Summit Dialogues will run from October 2020 to May 2021 at three levels of engagement: Members’ dialogues, global dialogues and independent dialogues, with their findings and agreed actions feeding into the work of the Action Tracks.
- FAO continues to provide its full support to the Special Envoy in the preparatory process towards the Food Systems Summit, with representation in the governance structure, hosting of the Rome-based Secretariat team members, engagement as a UN Anchor Organization for Action Track 1 and through the provision of inputs to the Food Systems Summit Dialogues.
- Recent conclusions of the 27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture and 25th Session of the Committee on Forestry reiterate the growing demand for FAO to take a lead role in supporting Members in the development of their food systems. The creation of a new Food Systems and Food Safety Division provides a basis for strengthening the coordination of inputs to the Food Systems Summit and to ensuring that the Organization is well placed to support post-Summit implementation through its new Strategic Framework.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

The Programme Committee is invited to provide guidance on:

- The status of preparations towards the Food Systems Summit, *inter alia*, the work of the governance structures and the two main components of the process towards the Summit: the Action Tracks and the Food Systems Summit Dialogues.
- The support being provided by the Organization to the Special Envoy in the preparatory process towards the Food Systems Summit.
- The mechanisms that will need to be implemented to ensure that the outcomes of the Summit are fully realized.
- The implementation of the conclusions of the 27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture and 25th Session of the Committee on Forestry with respect to FAO’s work on food systems.
- The centrality of a food systems approach as a basis for the new FAO Strategic Framework and the need to structure the Framework in a way that ensures substantive support to post-Summit implementation.
Draft Advice

The Committee:

- acknowledged the robustness of the preparatory process towards the Food Systems Summit and the substantive technical and logistical support that FAO is providing to the process and requested FAO to continue to work towards the successful conclusion of this process;
- noted the importance of establishing substantive implementation and accountability mechanisms to ensure follow-up on the outcomes of the Summit;
- noted the conclusions of the 27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture and 25th Session of the Committee on Forestry in relation to FAO’s work on food systems; and
- requested that FAO reflect the centrality of food systems transformation in its new Strategic Framework in a way that facilitates substantive support to Members in their post-Summit implementation efforts.
I. Introduction

1. This document provides an update to document PC 128/7 presented to the 128th Session of Programme Committee in June 2020 which elaborated the objectives of the UN Food Systems Summit and the governance structures that had been established to support the development and implementation of the process towards the Summit. In the intervening months, the UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat team, with support from FAO, WFP and IFAD, have further developed the two key components of the process towards the Summit, namely the five Action Tracks and the Food Systems Summit Dialogues.

2. The document first provides a brief update on the governance structures followed by a more detailed explanation of the Action Tracks and Food Systems Summit Dialogues and concludes with an explanation of FAO’s support to the Summit process and a summary of developments in the Organization’s work in support of Food Systems Transformation more broadly.

II. Update on Summit Governance Structure

3. Following its initial meeting in July 2020, a second meeting of the Advisory Committee was held on 9 October 2020. The Committee members reviewed the extent to which the different workstreams of the process towards the Summit are integrated, the proposed methodology for the Food Systems Summit Dialogues and the mobilizing of resources to support the Summit vision and work streams.

4. Following a launch meeting held in August 2020, a second meeting of the Scientific Group held in September 2020, reviewed initial drafts of scientific papers prepared to underpin each Action Track and received an update on the joint modelling effort in collaboration with FAO, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and other partners.

5. The Champions Network will start with a group of first movers, eventually becoming open to anyone wanting to “champion” food system transformation, recognizing that food systems are global, regional and local. Champions must be willing to actively support and demonstrate leadership towards a new food systems agenda which recognizes its interdependencies and be able to help deliver a commitment for action towards a food systems agenda by the time of the Summit, so that they are playing a role in championing action and displaying what is possible.

6. A UN Task Force chaired by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has been established to ensure that the Summit can build on the knowledge and unique capabilities of the entire UN system to deliver on the food systems agenda beyond the Summit. The Task Force will work with and through the UN Anchor Organizations in each Action Track and will help in coordinating UN support to the Food Systems Summit Dialogues.

III. Key components of the process towards the Food Systems Summit

7. The outcomes of the Summit have been defined as:

   a) significant action and commitment to action, with measurable outcomes and impact that enable achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. This will include highlighting existing solutions and celebrating leaders in food systems transformation, as well as calling for new actions worldwide by different actors such as countries, cities, private sector, civil society, citizens and food producers;

   b) dramatically elevated public discourse about the importance of food systems leading to the achievement of the SDGs and how to get the public working for people and the planet;

   c) a high-level set of principles established through the process that will guide Members and other stakeholders to leverage their food systems capacity to support the SDGs. Distilled through all elements of the preparatory process, these principles will set an
optimistic and encouraging vision in which food systems play a central role in building a fairer, more sustainable world; and

- a system of follow-up and review that will drive new actions and results, allow for the sharing of experiences, lessons and knowledge, and incorporate new metrics for impact analysis.

8. In order to deliver on the outcomes of the Summit, two key components of the process have been developed: Action Tracks and Food Systems Summit Dialogues.

9. The Action Tracks are tasked to create synergies and solutions at local, national, regional, and global levels and to scale up and to accelerate existing initiatives which align to the Summit Vision and principles. To support this work, the Action Tracks will identify challenges, opportunities, and barriers, with the goal of reaching a multi-stakeholder alignment on actions for transforming food systems. The Action Tracks are:

1. **Ensure Access to Safe and Nutritious Food for All**
   Action Track 1 will support the progressive realization of the right to food by aiming to deliver zero hunger and improve levels of nutrition by enabling all people at all times to have access to sufficient quantities of affordable and safe food products that together comprise a healthy diet that is nutritionally balanced and provides adequate daily nutritional intake.

2. **Shift to Sustainable Consumption Patterns**
   Action Track 2 will work to catalyze a shift in consumer behavior that will create and build demand for sustainably produced food products and promote circular use of food resources, helping to reduce waste and improve nutrition, especially among the most vulnerable.

3. **Boost Nature-positive Production**
   Action Track 3 will work to develop end to end solutions along the food value chain which act to reduce emissions and increase carbon capture, thereby limiting anthropogenic contributions to climate change; promote the regeneration restoration and protection of critical ecosystems to conserve biodiversity, protect land and water, reduce food loss and energy usage.

4. **Advance Equitable Livelihoods**
   Action Track 4 will ensure that food systems developments expand inclusion, create opportunities for decent work to eliminate poverty, raising incomes across the food value chain, reducing risks for the world’s poorest and improving value distribution.

5. **Build Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stress**
   Action Track 5 will act to ensure continued functionality of sustainable food systems both in geographies subject to conflict, climatic and natural resource disasters, but also globally to mitigate the impacts of health-related pandemics on food systems at all levels of development.

10. The Action Tracks will be expected to think through their linkages with others, incorporate the co-benefits and trade-offs associated with alternative sets of action, and develop collaborative and coordinated action around key cross-cutting levers of change such as finance, policy, innovation, governance, data and evidence including scientific and indigenous knowledge, the empowerment of women, young people and marginalized groups, and respect cultural differences.

11. Each Action Track is expected to:
    - receive and build out the evidence base, issues, and important knowledge gaps of the Action Track;
    - develop exemplary aligned game changing and systemic solutions under the Action Track to be presented at the Summit;
c) present mechanisms that foster, encourage and allow the alignment of initiatives and actions/solutions under the Action Track and an articulated way to make those solutions happen with enablers that include policies, institutions, finance, incentives, data, innovation, advocacy, education and empowerment;

d) prepare a statement that sets out the ambition, challenge, opportunity and solutions, and explains how the Action Track produces co-benefits for the other Action Tracks and accounts for trade-offs.

e) identify and proactively engage with “pacesetter” countries, communities, private sector coalitions of action and others to advance action and commitment to action by the time of the Summit; and

f) articulate Post-Summit Activities and Change Implementation, as well as an accountability mechanism.

12. The membership of the Action Tracks is constituted by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs. UN Anchor Organizations will, inter alia: work with the Chair and Vice-Chair to lead the definition of core questions that will be used to both structure the work of the Action Track and provide a basis for the food systems dialogues to ensure that they generate consistent, meaningful, clear and focused inputs. They will also help lead the development of content related to the Action Track and ensure that key issues are tackled and help lead the set-up of mechanisms to drive implementation of proposed actions for the post-Summit. Members of the Scientific Group will engage in each area to ensure the tracks are underpinned by robust evidence and science.

13. Members have been encouraged to express their interest in engaging around the five Action Tracks and are expected to provide on the ground expertise for the direction of the Action Track, promote and advocate for the work of the Action Tracks at governmental level and ensure participation and dialogue within the government, host inclusive dialogues for the Food Systems Summit at national level bringing relevant findings into the work of the Action Track and leading mechanisms to drive implementation of proposed changes for the post-Summit.

Table 1 – Action Track Chairs, Vice-Chairs and UN Anchor Organizations

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<th>Action Track Chairs, Vice-Chairs and UN Anchor Organizations</th>
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<td>Action Track 1</td>
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<td>Ensure Safe and Nutritious Food For All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawrence Haddad, GAIN (Europe)</td>
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<td>Vice-Chair</td>
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<td>Youth Vice-Chair</td>
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<td>Janya Green, 4-H (North America)</td>
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14. Food Systems Summit Dialogues will take place at three levels between October 2020 and May 2021.

Members Dialogues:
Organized by National Authorities, involving leaders of food system stakeholder groups, the dialogues will allow participants to explore options for the future of local and national food systems and shape the national pathway to sustainable food systems by 2030. The findings of the Dialogues will be posted on a Dialogue Gateway website and synthesized for input to the process towards the Summit.

Global Dialogues:
Organized on behalf of the Summit Secretariat, a set of dialogues will be convened at high-level international events. They will be an opportunity to explore interconnections of food systems with global action for good nutrition, climate action, biodiversity, the ocean, finance, against desertification and more.

Independent Dialogues:
Organized by anyone, these dialogues will use toolkits accessed by individuals and organizations to establish multi-stakeholder dialogues. When dialogues follow the Summit principles their findings will be posted on the Dialogue Gateway website.

III. FAO’s Support to the Summit

15. FAO continues to provide its full support to the Special Envoy in the preparatory process towards the Food Systems Summit. The Organization is fully represented in the Governance Structures outlined above with the Director-General a member of the Advisory Committee, the Chief Economist as a member of the Scientific Group, and the Director of the Food Systems and Food Safety Division representing the Organization on the UN Task Force.

16. FAO hosts the Rome-based part of the Food Systems Secretariat which is focused on ensuring the provision of evidence and knowledge as inputs to the Action Tracks and to the country level Food Systems Dialogues. FAO’s technical contribution to the Summit is coordinated by the Chief Economist with the Director of the Food Systems and Food Safety Division as a member of the Food Systems Secretariat.

17. The Organization directly supports Action Track 1 on “Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food” as the core UN Agency. FAO will also promote the remaining Action Tracks through its involvement as a support UN Agency within individual tracks coordinated by the respective UN Anchor Organization, drawing in the extensive knowledge generated by its technical divisions.

18. The Scientific Group, with FAO’s support, is developing a series of papers on, inter alia, definitions and concepts and the modelling of trade-offs intrinsic to food systems.

19. FAO will support the provision of data and evidence on food systems to inform the country level food systems dialogues and through its extensive country office coverage, is also available to support the coordination and conduct of the Dialogues.

IV. FAO’s Broader Work in Support of Food Systems Transformation

20. The recent conclusions of the 27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG 27) and the 25th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 25) reiterate the growing demand for FAO to better integrate its long-standing support to the development of agricultural and food systems.

21. The COAG recognized the significance of sustainable food systems in achieving the 2030 Agenda, underscored the importance of the coordination of all stakeholders in adopting a food systems approach and highlighted the added urgency in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It requested FAO to continue supporting Members in developing sustainable food systems, where requested and as specific to each context, to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda,
including through such mechanisms as the Sustainable Food Systems Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), and requested that the Organization continue to provide full support to the preparatory process towards the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

22. The COFO requested FAO to support Members, upon request, in taking actions and increase investments towards the systematic integration of forests and trees, agroforestry and other innovative forest-related approaches into more sustainable food systems, acknowledging the added urgency in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

23. FAO is playing a lead role in the definition of approaches to food systems transformation and in advocating for greater attention to the way in which interventions in food systems are designed and implemented. FAO’s new strategies and initiatives, inter alia, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the Green Cities Initiative and its support to the Food Systems Summit are increasingly informed by, and supportive of, the transformation to more sustainable food systems.

24. Following the 164th Session of FAO Council’s decision on the structural adjustments, the creation of a new Food Systems and Food Safety Division has provided an opportunity to improve the integration and coordination of FAO’s work in support of Members and to provide more coherent involvement in the process towards the Food Systems Summit.

25. The process towards the UN Food Systems Summit provides a major opportunity for FAO to project what it is doing, to increase the visibility of, and deliver on, its leadership role. The development of FAO’s new Strategic Framework encapsulates a food systems transformation approach and will provide a solid basis for the Organization to provide its support to Members as they implement the actions and solutions developed in the context of the Food Systems Summit.